



April 6, 2010

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: GN Docket No. 09-191

Dear Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners:

The Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce would like to thank you for your thoughtful and deliberate construction of the National Broadband Plan. As an organization, our core objective is to promote a healthy, robust business climate in the Tri-Cities Region, coordinating the efforts of commerce, industry and professional services to stimulate human and economic development. Affordable high-speed Internet access is crucial to encouraging vigorous economic development we value in the Tri-Cities. As the Commission begins implementing the National Broadband Plan, we ask that you continue to remember the viewpoints of regions like ours.

The Tri-Cities, WA region is comprised of the cities of Kennewick, Pasco, Richland, West Richland, and other surrounding towns. The area is known for its diverse business landscape, populated by ample outdoor recreational activities, agriculture, energy production, shopping and dining options all within reach. The Tri-Cities region continues to be the least expensive place to live compared to other metropolitan areas in the Northwest, according to the ACCRA Cost of Living Index, which tracks cost of living trends nationwide.

Additionally, a March 2010 study released by Garner Economics consulting firm found the Tri-Cities ranked first in the nation for job growth for the second half of 2009. To maintain these positive trends, it is imperative that our communications infrastructure continues to reflect the interactive nature of our community, cutting across city and country lines.

In the current regulatory environment, broadband has fostered economic growth and job creation in and around the surrounding areas. Our region has experienced first-hand the positive benefits broadband deployment and adoption affords an area, but like so many American communities, we still have a ways to go. Despite ranking first nationally in job growth, our unemployment rate continues to hover around 9 percent.

A study by the Democratic Leadership Institute recently found that communities with new access to broadband enjoyed a 6.4 percent higher employment growth than before they had access to the service. However, network neutrality proposals would stifle private sector investment, decrease deployment and increase transaction costs and prices, thereby limiting the positive effect broadband can have on communities and consumers.

Maintaining the Internet's current regulatory framework is crucial to our regional vitality. The Commission should be committed to maximizing deployment so that affordable broadband can truly be a universal service enjoyed by all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. Hastings".

Colin Hastings  
Vice President